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<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1691-4320> (2017) The Dark Gate - for
soprano and piano. [Composition]

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The Dark Gate



For soprano and piano

By David Lancaster

Poetry by David Vogel



The Dark Gate

This music sets five poems by David Vogel (1891-1944), sung without a break:

- 1) On Summer Evenings
- 2) How Can I See You Love
- 3) An Autumn Day will Breathe
- 4) With Gentle Fingers
- 5) There is One Last Solitary Coach about to Leave

In his work and life Vogel was always an outsider. In Vienna (during WWI) he was imprisoned as a Russian subject; he subsequently adopted Austrian nationality then emigrated to Palestine before returning to settle in Paris. At the outbreak of WWII Vogel was arrested in France as an Austrian subject; on the Nazi invasion of France he was released and then re-arrested as a Jew before being transported to Auschwitz, where he was murdered in 1944.

Today Vogel is chiefly remembered for two short novels but there are also some thirty poems. The only anthology published in his lifetime was *Before the Dark Gate* (Vienna, 1923) from which I take my title, but some of the poems I have set were written later. With the benefit of hindsight they seem deeply imbued with the horror of the impending holocaust but this is only made explicit in the final poem, which is probably his last work.

I learned about Vogel and his poetry two or three years ago but after visiting Auschwitz and Birkenau in January 2016 I felt compelled to compose this piece, to re-tell Vogel's words and to reflect on my own memories of that place.

1

On summer evenings
the blue mists rise
From streams, and hang trembling
Among evening whispers.

At the edges of forests
Young girls sit alone
Their hair hanging loose
Weeping tears over nothing

2

How can I see you love
Standing alone
Amid storms of grief
Without feeling my heart shake (tremble)

A deep night
Blacker than the blackness of your eyes
Has fallen silently
On the world

And is touching your hair.

Come,
My hand will clasp your dreaming
Hand
And I shall lead you between the nights,
Through the pale mists of childhood.

3

An autumn day will breathe.
With a pale, trembling hand
It will slowly strip the black dress
From your sleeping village.

In front of your white house
He naked linden will stand
Sadly swaying.

I shall return, lonely,
Out of the night
Bow gently to her and say:
Take my greeting to your mistress.

But you
Will go on softly sleeping on your bed.

4

With gentle fingers
The rain is softly
Playing sad melodies
On the black instrument of night.

Now we are sitting in darkness,
Each in their own house
Listening to the rain
Telling our sorrow.

For we have no more words.
Our feet have been leadened
By day.
There is no dance
Left in them.

5

There is one last solitary coach about to leave.
Let us get in and go,
For it won't wait.

I have seen young girls going softly
With sad faces
That look ashamed and sorry
Like purple sunsets.

And chubby pink children
Who went simply
Because they were called.

And I've seen men
Who stepped proud and straight through the
streets of the world,
Far and wide,
They too got in calmly
And left.

And we are the last.
Day is declining.
The last, solitary coach is about to leave.
Let us too get in quietly
And go,
For it won't wait.

The Dark Gate

On Summer Evenings

David Vogel (1891-1944?)

David Lancaster

Adagio ♩=60 *p* languid, distant

On sum-mer eve-nings the blue mists rise

Adagio ♩=60 *quasi fp*

8 from streams and hang trem- bling a-mong eve-ning whis-pers.

14 *mp* At the ed-ges of for- ests— young girls sit a-

p

19 *mf* *mp*

lone, their hair hang- ing down. weep- ing

(8)

23 *p*

tears o - ver no - thing.

(8)

27

(8)

2. How Can I See You Love?

31 **Poco più mosso** ♩=72 *mp*

How _____ can_ I

Poco più mosso ♩=72

35 *mp* *mf*

see you _____ my love _____

39 *mp*

Stan - ding a -

43

mp *f*

p

lone a - mid storms of grief

p *f* *p* *f*

47

mp *mf*

with - out feel - ing my heart

mf *f* *p* *mf* *p*

50

p

shake. — A deep night

p

8vb

54

bla-cker than the black-ness of your eyes has fal - len

(8)-----

57 *pp*

si-lent-ly_ on the world. And is touch - ing your

p 3 3 *mp* 3

60

hair. Come, my hand will

mf 3 3 3

8^{vb}-----

64

mp

clasp your dream-ing hand, And I shall

mp 3 3 3

8^{vb}

68

lead you bet - ween the nights.

mp 3 3 3

(8)

71

mp

Through the pale_ mists_ of child - hood_

mp 3 3 3

p 3 3

(8)

75 (hums) *pp*

mm

3

3

3

(8)

78

Sheet music for "The Rose Tree" (1860). The score is in 4/4 time and consists of three systems. The first system has a treble staff with a whole rest and a piano introduction in the bass staff. The second system features a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a triplet. The third system continues the melody in the treble staff and has whole rests in the bass staff.

3. An Autumn Day will Breathe

Lento $\text{♩} = 56$
mp slentando

84

An au-tumn day will breath, with a pale_ trem-bling hand_____

Lento $\text{♩} = 56$
mp

88

It will slow - ly strip the black___ dress from your sleep- ing_ vill- age.___

92

slentando

The na-ked lin-den will stand___ sad-ly sway ing_ And I shall re - turn_____

p

97

lone-ly, out_ of the night_ Bow gent-ly to_ her and say:

102 *slentando*

Take my greet-ing to your mis-tress. But you will go_ on_ sleep-ing so

106

rall. poco a poco

soft-ly on your bed_____

rall. poco a poco

4. With Gentle Fingers

112 **Piu Mosso** ♩=72

Piu Mosso ♩=72

f

f

Ped.

117

pp

f

Ped.

121

p

With gen-tle fin-gers the rain is soft - ly play-ing

pp

124

sad me-lo-dies on the black in-stru-ments of night.

f

Ped.

128

p

Now we are sitt-ing in

p

132

dark-ness, each in their own house. List'-ning to the rain,

136

tell - ing our sor - row.____

f *pp*

Ped.

140

p

For we have no more

f

Ped.

144

words____ Our feet have been lead-en'd by day. There is no dance____ left

p

148

in ____ them. ah ____ mm ____

mf *p* *pp*

3 5

Red.

153

ah ____

p *pp*

5. There is One Last Solitary Coach about to Leave

158 **Lento, rubato** $\text{♩} = 52$
p 3
 There is one last so-li-ta-ry coach a-bout to leave. Let us get

Lento, rubato $\text{♩} = 52$
p

163 *mp* *pp* *mp*
 in — and go. For it won't wait. And I have seen young

168 *p*
 girls go-ing soft - ly — with sad — fa-ces that look a - sham'd and

172

sor-ry like pur-ple sun - sets. And chub-by pink

177

child-ren who went sim-ply be-cause they were call'd. And I've seen men who stepp'd

181

proud and straight through the streets of the world far and wide They

185 *mf* *mp*

too got in calm-ly and left. And we are the last. Day is de

Poco meno mosso al fine

190 *p*

cli-ning. There is one last so-li-ta-ry coach, a-bout to

Poco meno mosso al fine

195 *slentando* *rall. poco a poco* *pp*

leave. Let us get in too and go, soft-ly, For it won't

rall. poco a poco

199

Musical score for measures 199-203, 4/4 time signature.

Measure 199: Treble clef, whole rest, "wait." below. Bass clef, half note G#4, half note A#4, dynamic *pp*.

Measure 200: Treble clef, whole rest. Bass clef, half note B4, half note C5, dynamic *pp*.

Measure 201: Treble clef, whole rest. Bass clef, half note D5, half note E5, dynamic *pp*.

Measure 202: Treble clef, whole rest. Bass clef, half note F#5, half note G5, dynamic *pp*.

Measure 203: Treble clef, whole rest. Bass clef, half note A5, half note B5, dynamic *pp*.

The score concludes with a double bar line in both staves.